Subject: The electrical method for cleaning copper and silver

Friessel, C.E.

[Leetsdale, PA]

1932

30 Spencer St
Leetsdale Pa
Feb 14, 1932

Mr. Howland Wood
156th St and Broadway
New York City.

Dear Mr. Wood:

In your annual report to the A.N.S., as printed in the February Numismatist, you mention the cleaning of silver and copper coins by the electric process. I have often wondered what the best way of removing tarnish and stains was, and have been afraid to try any cleaner or polish for fear of damaging the surface of the coins. Would it be possible for you to describe, briefly, the apparatus and method of using it?

I would appreciate this information.

Yours Sincerely
C.E. Friesell ANA. 4195

P.S. Some information on the A.N.S. would be interesting also.

February 16, 1933.

Mr. C. E. Friesell
30 Spencer Street
Leetsdale, Penna.

Dear Sir:

The electrical method by which we clean copper and silver is as follows: In a glass jar containing anywhere from one to several quarts of 2% solution of caustic soda we run into it a direct current;on the positive end either a platinum wire or a piece of iron, on the negative end we place the coins. For this purpose we use a rectifier or trickle charger as our current here is alternating and we want direct. Also. we want to stop the current down to anywhere from 1/2 to 3 amperes. For the rectifier that gives out say 3 amperes you could put six to eight jars of solution, attaching one to the other, though at times we have run a three quart jar with virtually 3 amperes going through it. This would be all right for silver but it would work a little too quick possibly in cleaning corrosion from copper.

With our silver coins we keep them in from half an hour to several hours. This loosens the tarnish but does not take it off so that we have to remove it with a soft wet brush.

With ancient copper coins heavily encrusted with a green patination we sometimes leave the current going through from three to nine months . As the water evaporates you simply add fresh water as the caustic soda solution is still there. Never use the same solution for copper and for silver but keep keep solutions. This solution can be kept for a long while and only need by thrown away when it becomes too dirty. The caustic soda you use should be U. S. proof, or better.

As for membership in the American Numismatic Society the only requirements are an interest in numismatics and the references of two or more persons who can certify as to the applicant's interest or good standing. Members are accorded the use of the library and as a partial return for the dues ($5.00 annually) members receive during the year the numbers of Numismatic Notes and Monographs as they are published, a list of which I am enclosing. Often the total value of these during one year far exceeds the amount of dues. I beg to remain,

Very truly yours,

HW:JC